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ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND FISH
BULLETIN No. 2

PRESERVATION

OF THE

Game, Fish and Forests of Alabama

AN ADDRESS

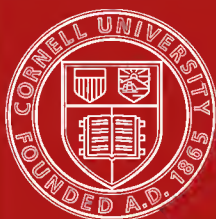
BY

JOHN H. WALLACE, Jr.

State Game and Fish Commissioner
and Secretary of the State Commission of Forestry

BEFORE THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION
AT BESSEMER, ALABAMA

JULY 23, 1908



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Preservation of the Game, Fish and Forests of Alabama.

ADDRESS.

Mr. *Wallace said :

“Mr. President, Members of the Alabama Press Association, ladies and gentlemen :

The honor, the privilege, of addressing this distinguished body, the Alabama Press Association, is to me the greatest pleasure of my life.

THE POWER AND USEFULNESS OF THE PRESS.

Representing as you do the most powerful and potential force in Alabama for the moulding of public sentiment and the crystalization of thought, the positions which you respectively occupy is one of signal responsibility. The exclusive means of the proper dissemination of ideas and the promulgation of views upon vital questions is through the medium of the press.

Those who peruse your editorials, which are but the expressions of individuals, are largely influenced and thus induced to act in line with the theories exploited through your columns.

Though your views may be unsound, your logic imperfect and your conclusions unjust, there is no one at hand when read, to refute the statements contained in your papers and they are generally accepted as truths.

I am happy to say that the editors of the Alabama Press Association are inspired by patriotic motives and have at heart the best interests of our magnificent state. Impelled by the conscience to discriminate between right and wrong, animated by the heart to feel, illuminated by the intellect with which to depict in classic style those sentiments that appertain to the well being of our people, the members of this organization have proven themselves to be most valiant knights and stalwarts, too, in inducing the peace, prosperity and concord which prevails in Alabama.

THE DUTY OF THE STATE.

The preservation of our natural resources whether it be in forests, in mines, in waterways, in game or in fish, is essentially the business of the State. It is necessary that the restraining hand of the law should be laid heavily on those who would wantonly and recklessly waste that which God has intended not only for those who now live to enjoy, but has designed as a heritage of generation yet to be.

The natural assets with which providence has so abundantly endowed us may be likened to a son coming into his inheritance. If he is wise and makes judicious use of the property left him by his father, he can live happily and comfortably on the legitimate increment, can add to his possessions, and when he passes from earth, have something left to bequeath his children. But on the other hand, if he is a spendthrift, if he recklessly and wantonly wastes his heritage, his descendants enjoy not that which by right should be theirs.

And so it is with our natural resources. If in its sovereign capacity, the state by the passage of wise laws protects the people's heritage, the time will never come when they shall want for those things which nature dealt out so abundantly to the fathers. On the contrary, if we allow the spirit of vandalism to rage rampant in Alabama as was the case in the past, the game, the fish, and the forests will only exist in memory and tradition.

THE FIRST GAME LAW.

The great Athenian law-giver, Solon, wrote the first game law for the protection of the deer in the forests of Greece and from ancient times during the mediaeval period in Europe and down to the present day, there has been no single exception in any enlightened state; all civilized countries have game laws.

BIRD LAWS, INSPIRED BY AGRICULTURISTS.

From a careful study of the subjects of game and fish protection and the laws relating thereto, we find that in a great many states where like laws have been enacted, that they have been brought about largely through interest taken in the subject by the agriculturists and horticulturists, the purpose being not only to protect game and insectivorous birds, but to preserve them in the largest number possible as valuable allies

to the farming community in the destruction of the various harmful insects that prey upon the growing crops to their detriment, and the destroying of noxious weed seeds and other harmful vegetation.

GAME LAWS PREVENT VANDALISM.

Game laws have a marked tendency to take the guns out of the hands of a shiftless and roving class, who have no means of support other than to subsist from hand to mouth in an improvidential way, being a class of citizens about cities, county seats and smaller towns who rove at will upon the premises of adjacent owners and sometimes, either wantonly or accidentally, kill or injure stock, break down fences in the farming community and wantonly shoot at anything coming within their range and observation, whether in orchard, in field, or garden; and because they have a tendency to restrain and handicap these vandals who may secure enough ammunition for a half day's shooting in the country, but never secure enough money at one time to purchase and pay for a hunter's license.

The decent, law-abiding and self-supporting man, who pays his license as a rule, will not undertake to trespass upon the farms or agricultural community; and in most instances, feels it his duty to respect the rights of the husbandmen and to secure his permission before he ventures upon his lands.

INTERESTS OF THE MASSES CONSERVED BY GAME LAWS.

Game birds and animals, by reason of the fact that they furnish a valuable source of food supply and are esteemed as great delicacies, in many sections were hunted almost to the point of extinction.

At one time, game laws were considered to be class legislation enacted exclusively for the benefit of the rich, but this is an exploded theory. The wealthy man can step aboard his palace car and in a few hours be transported into a veritable sportsmans elysium. Not so with the ordinary individual; if he is to enjoy the sport and is to partake of game, he must capture it near at hand. Hence game laws are unquestionably in the interest of the common masses.

AMERICA A PARADISE FOR PRISTINE NIMRODS.

The mind of man imperatively demands recreation. Unless diversion can be found in a legitimate vein, he, in his great unrest, seeks that which is not wholesome. Hunting has ever been the sport of kings, peasants and savages alike, and the pursuit of the wild denizens of the fields and brush will always hold for man an incomparable infatuation. When America was first discovered, it was an idealistic sportsman's paradise; buffalo, deer, moose, elk, bear and panther roamed the forest; geese, duck, brant, swan, and wild pigeons flew overhead in countless millions. These game animals and birds have been slaughtered to such a great extent that the sport once enjoyed by primeval Nimrods lingers only in recollection.

THE VALUE OF BIRDS TO FARMERS.

The great question of the cause of the prevalence of plant maladies and the problem of weed control each year grows more harassing to the farmers. The reason for this is simple. Our most beneficial birds, among them doves, robins, field larks and bullbats, have been so ruthlessly destroyed that in less than a generation their numbers have decreased eighty per cent.

When it is recalled that the stomach of one dove recently killed in Tennessee contained over seven thousand weed seeds, and when it is understood that a healthy dove will destroy each feeding day at least five thousand prospective weeds, more than two negroes working at one dollar per day each could uproot in the same time, it is easy to see that these birds prove in the end to be the cheapest hoe hands the farmer can secure.

As an insect devourer, the bull-bat is equally serviceable. It feeds on malaria-spreading mosquitoes and its work transcends the combined effect of a case of quinine or a tank of kerosene oil. As a fever germ abater in a malarial district, a flock of bull-bats is worth a grove of quinine trees.

THE FEATHERED CHORISTERS OF THE TREES—THEIR INFLUENCE ON MAN'S FINER SENSIBILITIES.

Song birds, aside from their brilliance, so pleasing to the observer, and their sweet music, redolent with liquid melody, have a civic value of inestimable intrinsic worth that, if truly

known and practically comprehended, would win millions of friends for the trilling choristers of the forests, who would indignantly halt the crusade of relentless extermination so strenuously waged that it gives excellent promise of ultimately depopulating all creation of man's valiant army of feathered co-adjutors.

Did you ever hear an inspiring strain of music that failed to thrill the soul with loftier ideals and more exalted aspirations?

All who dwell in an atmosphere of intellectual refinement yearn for brilliant things in birds, flowers, sunsets and in their fellow mortals. A heartless boy will inevitably grow into a cruel and relentless man. If taught to hold the law in high esteem when young in years, he becomes a patriotic man, with a profound reverence for the statutes of his state. The most courageous man, brave warriors, the most aggressive leaders, are those of gentle natures and of tender hearts. Instill these precepts into the souls of boys, and existing in such noble environment, it will mold characters that will ornament society, and serve to lift mankind from the miasmatic swamps of degeneracy to the mountain tops of true nobility, where radiates the splendor of moral grandeur.

BIRDS CHECK THE APPROACH OF THE MEXICAN BOLL WEEVIL.

Those who love Alabama, who glorify her splendid history, who delight in her imperishable traditions, and who take pride in her boundless natural resources, are eager to preserve and protect all that combine to fashion our magnificent state.

The principal vocation of our brave and patriotic people is in agriculture, which is one of the most ancient and honorable of arts known to man. Upon the yield of our fields depends the happiness and prosperity of our citizens. When there are abundant crops of fleecy cotton and our garnerers are full of golden grain, the anthems of contentment and the cadences of joy resound throughout our realm, and all the world seems set to a tune that is played by happy hearts.

We are assisted in making good crops by an army of feathered friends that work for the husbandman without pay. The part that birds play in protecting farmers from the ravages of injurious insects that prey upon the crops and orchards, would be well understood if all the bright colored, harmless songsters of the trees should be exterminated. That dreaded pest, the

Mexican boll weevil, that destroys the cotton fields like a withering simoon is speedily marching toward Alabama, and scientific research discloses the fact that birds are its deadliest enemies. Over one hundred birds that live in Alabama are known to feed on the boll weevil. Birds annually destroy thousands of tons of noxious weed seeds that are a constant menace to agricultural interest, and which if left to grow, would smother and stifle the crops.

SAVE THE BIRDS.

Without birds, our fair state would soon become not only non-productive, but absolutely uninhabitable. A noted French scientist has declared that without birds to check the ravages of insects, human life would vanish from this planet within the space of nine years; and I venture the prediction that in half that time, no one could live in Alabama were the birds to suddenly leave for places where their services are better appreciated.

Cruel men and wanton boys sometimes shoot for sport man's feathered allies. It would be cheaper if the rifle that discharged the shot were loaded with golden bullets and fired into the sea. Boys were erstwhile allowed to catch and sell young mocking birds and red birds for fifty cents each. The state is made at least one hundred dollars poorer by the act. The meadow lark or each one of a bevy of quail in a ten acre wheat, corn or cotton field earns five dollars in a single season as an insect destroyer.

Every precaution is taken by us to prevent a thief from stealing even the most trifling of our possession, but we are oblivious to any effort to dissuade the gunner from shooting birds upon whose existence depends our very livelihood.

Let us unite every energy we possess to save our friends, the birds, from destruction; if we do this, soon every bush will contain a singer and every tree a choir.

LOCAL GAME LAWS ARE FAILURES.

Experience has demonstrated that local legislation on the subjects of game fish protection and preservation results in absolute failure. Game laws in the past have been violated in most instances because the offenders knew that they would not be prosecuted. Then, to concede that it is right to protect

game and fish and to enact laws to be for its protection, how is the work of enforcing these laws to be accomplished?

It is a matter of fact that for the last twenty years there has been a growing disregard and disrespect for local game and fish laws, and an increasing slaughter of our valuable assets until conditions became alarming in the extreme. The constabulary, or the local peace officers would not enforce these statutes.

THE GAME LAW, A FINANCIAL WONDER.

Hence the Legislature of Alabama at the last session enacted a game and fish law that stands out pre-eminently as the most perfect piece of legislation on these subjects ever suggested. The enforcement of the game and fish laws are committed to a State Game and Fish Commissioner who designates a game warden for each county, who is in active charge of all prosecutions arising under these laws. Likewise every sheriff, deputy sheriff, policeman, constable, and justice of the peace are ex-officio deputy game wardens, charged with the active and vigilant enforcement of these statutes. All game birds and animals are protected, also our song and insectivorous birds.

Those who enjoy the sport and recreation found in hunting and fishing should pay for the protection and preservation of the wild denizens, the pursuit of which gives them pleasure. Hence we have inaugurated a license system, charging sportsmen one dollar to hunt in county of residence, three dollars to hunt in all the counties in the state and have imposed a non-resident license of \$15.00. This money goes into the game and fish protection fund for the purpose of defraying expense incident to the enforcement of the game and fish laws. One-half of all the fines collected under these statutes belongs to the wardens and the other half is forwarded to the State Treasury and is placed to the credit of the game and fish protection fund. There was no appropriation made by the Legislature to put these statutes into operation, which was done without costing the state a single cent.

During the first year we collected \$20,425.08 and on yesterday there was to the credit of the game and fish protection fund after all the expense of the department of game and fish had been paid, the sum of \$15,317.10, a net profit to the state. During the year 1908, we will collect over \$25,000.00 from the sale of hunters' license alone. Be it said in their laudation, no

sportsman has ever objected to the payment of the fee charged for a hunter's license. They get it back an hundred fold in the abundance of game the law assures to the Nimrods of Alabama.

THE NECESSITY OF WARDEN SERVICES.

Experience has incontestably demonstrated that unless county wardens are made responsible to an executive head of the state department that they become lax and negligent in enforcing the laws for the protection of game and fish. I am happy to say that the game warden constabulary in Alabama has been most active and vigilant and but few offenders have escaped prosecution. During the year of 1907, the Department of Game and Fish secured the conviction of 182 violators of the game and fish laws. Up to yesterday for the year 1908, we have convicted 54 persons for infractions under these statutes. We convicted a state senator, a sheriff, and a county solicitor, as well as many other prominent citizens. Likewise the humble have been brought to justice, the law being enforced among the mighty as well as the lowly.

VIOLATIONS DECREASING.

There will be noticed a marked decrease in offenses and the great activity that must have been required to have secured so large a number of convictions under a new statute during the single year. Under local laws, a conviction was a thing unheard. It means that the game wardens are actively discharging the duties of their offices and that the people of Alabama are overwhelmingly in favor of convicting persons who violate our game and fish laws.

INDISCRIMINATE HUNTING A MENACE TO THE STATE.

Formerly an army of not less than ten thousand armed men roamed the fields and forests of Alabama each day from the first of September to the first of October, armed with every character of fire arm and killed not less than nine millions of quail each year of value to the people of Alabama to the princely sum of \$2,450,000. There were shipped under old conditions not less than one-half million live birds each season from this state, which draft upon our quail supply would have soon left

us exhausted of that most excellent bird. Practically every restaurant in the state sold game that was murdered by pot-hunters, which baleful practice gave support to a worthless class that came near slaughtering many of our most valuable species to the point of extinction. Likewise song and insectivorous birds were killed recklessly and wantonly, there being no law under which to prosecute those who persisted in this pernicious practice.

BLACKS NOW REQUIRED TO WORK.

The sale of single barrel shot guns has been cut down at least five hundred per cent., as has the sale of black powder shells, the kind that pot-hunters and negroes used. Negroes formerly idled or pretended to hunt and under this pretext, committed every character of crime. They have become completely disarmed under the game law and must now pursue the avocations of an honest and industrious life.

GAME RAPIDLY INCREASING.

Game birds and animals in Alabama have multiplied under the operation of our game law system at least fifty per cent. In fact, from the best information obtainable, I confidently believe that we began the breeding season this year with at least sixty per cent. more than last.

ALABAMA STREAMS ONCE TEEMED WITH GAME-FISH.

Alabama at one time was a Walton's paradise. Coursing through this state are hundreds of beautiful, limpid streams in whose placid depths formerly were found every specie of game fish known to this clime. It is a known fact that the waters of this state have been dynamited, seined, netted and trapped until they have in a large measure become practically depleted of fish. All that is required is to let the fish of Alabama have a rest, and the streams will once more be restocked and will teem with desirable species of the finny tribe as they did in pristine times.

THE MURDEROUS DYNAMITER, AND HIS COHORTS.

The murderous dynamiter that throws his cartridge into a stream gets only a small proportion of the fish he kills. The rest float off dead, a dead loss to humanity. He likewise kills all of the small fry, which, if left to grow, would some day develop into delicate table morsels. Those who seine streams, dump out the small fish and never think of replacing them so repacious are they to get their greedy hands on the glistening beauties they have dragged from their haunts.

The nefarious practice of dynamiting, seining, netting, trapping the streams has been in a large measure stopped under the operation of our fish laws, and it is a known fact that sport with hook and line in Alabama during last season has been better than for twenty-five years.

STREAMS WILL BE RESTOCKED.

When we establish the fish culture station contemplated by the bill of Senator Joseph F. Johnston, which has already passed the Senate and which now awaits the action of the House, every stream in Alabama will be restocked with fish, which we propose to protect and preserve for the benefit of the people at large, prosecuting and pursuing with the vengeance of a spiteful fury on the trail of a lost spirit the vandals who erstwhile haunted our streams with illicit devices eager to drain them of every specie of fish.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE FORESTS.

Upon the preservation of the forests depends the health, happiness and prosperity of the people. A land without trees is one without inhabitants and is merely a desert. The value of our forests has not been appreciated by our people, because of the erstwhile abundance of timber for utilitarian purposes. Nature teaches best by anthesis. Therefore, we will not miss the magnificent monarchs of the forest until they are all laid low. Nowhere on the face of the earth have so many different species of different trees grown so luxuriantly as in Alabama. Millions of dollars worth of logs have been burned in the process of clearing lands for cultivation.

A RELENTLESS CRUSADE AGAINST OUR TREES WAGED BY
LUMBERMEN.

Saw mills controlled by foreign corporations have waged a relentless crusade against our forests, making no pretense of leaving trees that would some day make lumber. In their wake is found a tractless waste. So startling has become the condition relative to our future lumber supply, that the whole country has awakened to the reality that unless a speedy halt is called, the time must inevitably come when a timber famine will exist.

DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS BRINGS HARDSHIPS ON THE PEOPLE.

Scientific investigation has disclosed the fact that the destruction of forests causes storms and cyclones, drouths and likewise floods. The mind of the whole nation seems imbued with the idea of establishing a vast forest reserve for the protection of the heads of rivers. It has been ascertained that the destruction of forests causes the water to rush rapidly down the hillsides, thence into the creeks, on into the rivers causing overflows and great destruction to life and property. Were the forests left standing at the heads of rivers, the water would gently soak in through the leaves, and loam, and would gradually distribute itself into the streams. Floods fill up the channels of rivers, causing sandbars, which result in a detriment to navigation.

LOOK WELL TOWARDS SAVING THE YOUNG TIMBER.

The virgin forests must inevitably be cut away so great is the demand for lumber. Hence the problem which now confronts the people of Alabama is the care of the growing second growth timber and in devising a practical plan by which they can engage in the art of growing useful timber trees.

The greatest damage done to young timber is caused by forest fires. It has been customary for years to burn the forests with the idea that it may make spring and summer grazing better, but this has long since been proven to be a veritable fallacy. Whenever a forest fire sweeps through a piece of woods, it destroys every prospective tree to the age of four years. Hence if we were to have the forest fires only quadrennially, there would be no increase in the supply of timber.

TIMBER CULTURE ENCOURAGED BY FORESTRY LAWS.

The forestry laws of Alabama encourage the practice of timber culture by exempting from taxation any land which has been denuded of trees, the taxable value of which does not exceed the value of five dollars per acre.

As an axiomatic fact, no law is automatic. Hence in order to give force and effectiveness to any statute, there must be a specially constituted service designated to enforce it. Hence the county game and fish wardens are declared forest wardens whose duty it is to enforce the forest laws of this state. It is unlawful for any person to set fire to any woods, brush, grass,, grain or stubble field not their own. It is likewise unlawful for any person to set fire to his own woods without giving five days written notice to adjacent land owners. Locomotive engines must be equipped with appliances to arrest the escape of sparks from smokestacks.

HIGH POINTS IN FORESTRY LAW.

It is unlawful to attach any electric lighting wire or other lighting appliances to any tree in any town or city in this state.

The monies derived from fines resulting from violations of the forests laws are paid into the forest reserve fund, which money is expended by the State Commission of Forestry in the issuance of bulletins and in the enforcement of the forest laws. The State of Alabama has consented by an act of the Legislature for the government to acquire territory in this state for the establishment of a forest reserve. It is to be hoped that the next Congress will pass the White Mountain and Appalachian Forest Reserve Bill. Unless this is done, many of the great industries and manufacturies which are propelled by water power must close down for at least six months in the year.

FOREST CULTURE IN EUROPE.

Many countries that were formerly prosperous, peaceful and happy, since the forests have been cut away have become uninhabitable. Many of the older countries in Europe are resetting their forests at a cost of twenty dollars per acre.

LET US STRUGGLE TO SAVE THE TREES, UPON WHICH DEPENDS
OUR LEASE ON LIFE.

By stimulating the sentiment among the people to care for the timber we now have and by inducing them to engage in the propagation of trees, there will not be entailed upon us the great hardship which has been visited upon the citizens of the old world.

Let us struggle to keep our beautiful state from being desolated by the annihilation of the forests, for the foliage from the trees give to us the very oxygen we breathe, without which human life would become extinct.

THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PRESS.

Without the support, and the enthusiastic co-operation of the press of Alabama, it would have been impossible for the Department of Game and Fish to have made the success it has of the statutes committed to it for enforcement. The editors having at heart the state's best interest, have informed the people of the provisions of the law, dwelt earnestly and eloquently on the benefits of this legislation and have cemented sentiment forever in Alabama favorable to these statutes.

My heartfelt gratitude has been constantly elicited by the hundreds of kind expressions relative to my work which have appeared in your columns. The belief is induced from the result which has been achieved by you that when you are right, the world awaits your commands.

Your field is one of power and of constant usefulness. You have proven that you are well equipped to discharge your responsible tasks, you have the respect, the admiration, aye the love of your people. For 'tis for them that you labor unceasingly and poorly paid.

NOBLE EDITORS—PATRIOTS WHO HAVE GONE TO THEIR REWARD.

To the younger members of this Association, I would say that you need no loftier inspiration than is to be found in the study of the life and character of such brilliant writers, noble patriots, and gifted sons of genius as Langdon of Mobile, Tyler of Montgomery, Monroe of the "Eutaw Whig," Grant of the "Grove Hill Democrat," Nunnelee, the elder, of the "Eutaw Whig and Observer," Gilbert of the "West Alabamian," War-

ren of the "Tuscaloosa Times," Roberts of the "Birmingham Iron-Age," Powell of the "Union Springs Herald," Grubbs of the "Decatur News," Clay of the "Huntsville Democrat," Keller of the "North Alabamian," Colonel Harvey of the "Greensboro Beacon," Colonel Grant, ex-State Treasurer, of the "Jacksonville Republican," and D. White of the "Moulton Advertiser."

The memory of these great Alabamians is forever securely enshrined in the hearts of the people—for whom they performed a labor of love.

THE HELP OF THE PRESS INVOKED.

Let me invoke a continuance of your valuable services—without your aid my right arm is paralyzed—and we will point out to our people the almost incomputable value of their priceless heritages, and teach them to properly use, foster and preserve their birth-right, that it may go down to future generations, a glorious and unrivaled benefaction.



